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Life of the Rev. William Tennent.

AMONG the duties which every generation owes to those which are to succeed it, we may reckon the careful delineation of the characters of those whose example deserves, and may invite imitation. Example speaks louder than precept, and living practical religion has a much greater effect on mankind than argument or eloquence. Hence the lives of pious men become the most important sources of instruction and warning to posterity; while their exemplary conduct affords the best commentary on the religion they professed. But when such men have been remarkably favored of God, with unusual degrees of light and knowledge, and have been honored by the special and extraordinary influences of his Holy Spirit, and by the most manifest and wonderful interpositions of divine Providence in their behalf, it becomes a duty of more than common obligation,

to hand down to posterity the principal events of their lives, together with such useful inferences as they naturally suggest. A neglect of this duty, even by persons who may be conscious of the want of abilities necessary for the complete biographer, is greatly culpable; for if the strictest attention be paid to the truth of the facts related, and all exaggeration or partial representation be carefully avoided, the want of other furniture can be no excuse for burying in oblivion that conduct which, if known, might edify and benefit the world.

The writer of these memoirs has difficulties of a peculiar kind to encounter, in attempting to sketch the life of that modest, humble, and worthy man, whose actions, exercises, and sentiments he wishes to record. Worldly men, who are emulous to transmit their names to following ages, take care to leave such materials for the future historian, as may secure the celebrity which they seek. But the humble fol-

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lower of the meek and lowly Jesus, whose sole aim is the glory of God, in the welfare of immortal souls, goes on from day to day, as seeing Him who is invisible, careful to approve himself only to the Searcher of hearts, regardless of worldly fame or distinction, and leaving it to his heavenly Father to reward him openly, in the day of final account. The writer of such a man's life, must principally rely on a personal acquaintance with him, and the communications of his intimate friends, for the information which shall be imparted to the public. In these circumstances it is peculiarly embarrassing if some of the facts to be recorded are of such a nature, that it is most desirable to have their authenticity so fully established, that incredulity shall be confounded, and the sneer of the sceptical and profane lose its effect. But the writer of the following narrative, though placed in these circumstances and having such facts to detail, has nevertheless determined to proceed. He has refreshed and corrected his own recollection, by the most careful inquiries that he could possibly make of others, until he is well assured, that what he shall state is incontestable truth. From the very nature of several things of which an account will be given, they do not indeed admit of any other direct testimony than that of the remarkable man to whom they relate. But if there ever was a person who deserved to be believed unreservedly on his own word, it was he. He possessed an integrity of soul and a soundness of judgment, which did actually secure him an unlimited confidence from all who knew him.

Every species of deception, falsehood, and exaggeration he abhorred and scorned. He was an Israelite indeed in whom there was no guile. With such materials, then as have been mentioned, and for a work of such character as has been hinted, the writer has undertaken his task. He has undertaken what he would most gladly have resigned to an abler hand; but from which as no other offered, he *dared not* withhold his own. He could wish that speculative and even unbelieving minds might be instructed and convinced by these memoirs. But his principal object, and that in which he trusts he shall not be entirely disappointed, is to direct, assist, and comfort pious souls, groaning under the pressure of the calamities which they often have to endure in their pilgrimage through the wilderness of this world.

The late Rev. WILLIAM TENNENT, of Freehold, in the county of Monmouth, in the state of New-Jersey, of whom we write, was the second son of the Rev. William Tennent, minister of the gospel at Neshaminy, in Bucks county, in the state of Pennsylvania. This last gentleman was originally a minister of the church of England, in the then kingdom of Ireland, where he was born and received his education. He was chaplain to an Irish nobleman, but being conscientiously scrupulous of conforming to the terms imposed on the clergy of that kingdom, he was deprived of his living. He now became acquainted with the famous Gilbert Kennedy, of — a presbyterian minister, who had also been persecuted for his reli-

gious principles, and soon after married his daughter. Finding it difficult to continue at home with any satisfactory degree of usefulness, and his family increasing, after a few years he determined to emigrate to America, where he was encouraged to hope for a greater liberty of conscience, as well as the prospect of being employed in extending the Redeemer's kingdom in that new world. He arrived at Philadelphia in the summer of 1718, with his wife, four sons, and one daughter. His sons were, Gilbert, who was afterwards the pastor of the second presbyterian church in Philadelphia; William, the subject of these memoirs; John, who became pastor of the church at Freehold, and died at the age of twenty-five years; and Charles, afterwards minister of the presbyterian church at Whiteclay creek, whence he removed to Buckingham, in Maryland.

William Tennent, the father, on his first coming to America, settled at East Chester, in the then province of New-York, and afterwards removed to Bedford. In a short time he was called to Bucks county, in Pennsylvania, and preached at Bensalem and Smithfield; but soon after settled permanently at Neshaminy, in the same county. Being skilled in the Latin language, so as to speak and write it almost as well as his mother tongue, a good proficient also in the other learned languages, and well read in divinity, he determined to set up a school for the instruction of youth, particularly of those designed for the gospel ministry, as the best service he could render to God and his new adopted

country; education being then at a very low ebb. There appeared, in his apprehension, a very large field for the propagation of the gospel, could a sufficient number of faithful laborers be found for so great a harvest. A learned ministry, he well knew, was necessary to the sure foundation of the church of Christ, especially in a new country, so peculiarly exposed to every invader, and where the enemy might so successfully sow tares among the wheat. In pursuance of this design, he established an academy, and built a house, since known by the name of the log-college.

Soon after his arrival in Bucks county, on full consideration, he left the church of England, and, to enlarge his sphere of usefulness, determined to join the presbyterian church. Accordingly he applied to the synod of Philadelphia for admission into their communion; and on due examination, and complying with their stated rules, he was very cordially received. At the first meeting of the synod afterwards, he addressed that venerable body, in an elegant Latin oration, which added greatly to his celebrity, and increased the hopes of his friends as to the success of the institution he had founded. To erect and support such an important seminary of learning, out of his own private purse at that early period, in a new country just rising from a savage wilderness, and to devote himself to so severe a service, in addition to his pastoral charge, was a boon to his generation, that at this day cannot be easily nor sufficiently appreciated.

His expectations, in a few

years, were more than realized. In this institution the principal men of the day, and many of the presbyterian clergy, were educated, and added greatly to the increase and usefulness of their churches. The late Rev. Messrs. Rowland, Campbell, Lawrence, Beatty, Robinson, and Samuel Blair, with many others, were among the number of his pupils, and thought themselves honored by being considered as sons of this humble seminary. Here also his own four sons received their education, and were prepared for their important services. Had these been the only fruits of that infant academy, America would have reason to rejoice, and to render thanks to that God who directed this gentleman to visit her shores.

His second son, WILLIAM, who is the subject of these sketches, was born on the 3d day of June, 1705, in the county of Antrim, in Ireland, and was just turned of thirteen years when he arrived in America.—He applied himself with much zeal and industry, to his studies, and made great proficiency in the languages, particularly in the Latin. Being early impressed with a deep sense of divine things, he soon determined to follow the example of his father and eldest brother, by devoting himself to the service of God in the ministry of the gospel. His brother Gilbert being called to the pastoral charge of the church at New Brunswick, in New Jersey, and making a very considerable figure as a useful and popular preacher; William determined as he had completed his course in the languages, to study divin-

ity under his brother. Accordingly he left his father's house, with his consent and by his advice, and went to New Brunswick. At his departure from home, which was considered as his setting out in life, his father addressed him with great affection, commanding him to the favor and protection of that God, from whom he himself had received so much mercy, and who had directed him in all his migrations. He gave him a small sum of money, as the amount of all he could do for him, telling him that if he behaved well and did his duty, this was an ample provision for him; and if he should act otherwise, and prove ungrateful to a kind and gracious God, it was too much and more than he deserved. Thus, with a pittance and the blessing of a pious and affectionate parent, of more consequence than thousands of pounds, the young student set out in the world.

After a regular course of study in theology, Mr. Tennent was preparing for his examination by the presbytery as a candidate for the gospel ministry. His intense application affected his health, and brought on a pain in his breast and a slight hectic. He soon became emaciated, and at length was like a living skeleton. His life was now threatened. He was attended by a physician, a young gentleman who was attached to him by the strictest and warmest friendship. He grew worse and worse, till little hope of life was left. In this situation his spirits failed him, and he began to entertain doubts of his final happiness. He was conversing, one morning, with his brother, in Latin, on

the state of his soul, when he fainted and died away. After the usual time, he was laid out on a board, according to the common practice of the country, and the neighborhood were invited to attend his funeral on the next day. In the evening, his physician and friend returned from a ride into the country, and was afflicted beyond measure at the news of his death.— He could not be persuaded that it was certain; and on being told that one of the persons who had assisted in laying out the body thought he had observed a little tremor of the flesh under the arm, although the body was cold and stiff, he endeavored to ascertain the fact. He first put his own hand into warm water to make it as sensible as possible, and then felt under the arm, and at the heart, and affirmed that he felt an unusual warmth, tho' no one else could. He had the body restored to a warm bed, and insisted that the people, who had been invited to the funeral, should be requested not to attend. To this the brother objected as absurd, the eyes being sunk, the lips discolored, and the whole body cold and stiff. However, the doctor finally prevailed; and all probable means were used, to discover symptoms of returning life. But the third day arrived and no hopes were entertained of success but by the doctor, who never left him night nor day. The people were again invited, and assembled to attend the funeral. The doctor still objected, and at last confined his request for delay to one hour, then to half an hour, and finally to a quarter of an hour. He had discovered

that the tongue was much swoln, and threatened to crack. He was endeavoring to soften it, by some emollient ointment put upon it with a feather, when the brother came in, about the expiration of the last period, and mistaking what the doctor was doing, for an attempt to feed him, manifested some resentment, and in a spirited tone, said, "It is shameful to be feeding a lifeless corpse;" and insisted with earnestness that the funeral should immediately proceed. At this critical and important moment, the body, to the great alarm and astonishment of all present opened its eyes, gave a dreadful groan, and sunk again into apparent death. This put an end to all thoughts of burying him, and every effort was again employed in hopes of bringing about a speedy resuscitation. In about an hour, the eyes again opened, a heavy groan proceeded from the body, and again all appearance of animation vanished. In another hour life seemed to return with more power, and a complete revival took place, to the great joy of the family and friends, and to the no small astonishment and conviction of very many who had been ridiculing the idea of restoring to life a dead body.

Mr. Tennent continued in so weak and low a state for six weeks, that great doubts were entertained of his final recovery. However, after that period he recovered much faster, but it was about twelve months before he was completely restored.— After he was able to walk the room, and to take notice of what passed around him, on a Sunday afternoon, his sister, who had

staid from church to attend him, was reading in the Bible, when he took notice of it, and asked her what she had in her hand. She answered that she was reading the Bible. He replied, "What is the Bible? I know not what you mean." This affected the sister so much that she burst into tears, and informed him, that he was once well acquainted with it. On her reporting this to the brother when he returned, Mr. Tennent was found, upon examination, to be totally ignorant of every transaction of his life previous to his sickness. He could not read a single word, neither did he seem to have any idea of what it meant. As soon as he became capable of attention, he was taught to read and write, as children are usually taught, and afterwards began to learn the Latin language under the tuition of his brother. One day as he was reciting a lesson in Cornelius Nepos, he suddenly started, clapped his hand to his head, as if something had hurt him, and made a pause. His brother asking him what was the matter, he said, that he felt a sudden shock in his head, and it now seemed to him as if he had read that book before. By degrees his recollection was restored, and he could speak the Latin as fluently as before his sickness. His memory so completely revived, that he gained a perfect knowledge of the past transactions of his life, as if no difficulty had previously occurred. This event, at the time made a considerable noise, and afforded, not only matter of serious contemplation to the devout Christian, especially when

connected with what follows in this narration, but furnished a subject of deep investigation and learned inquiry to the real philosopher and curious anatomist.

The writer of these memoirs was greatly interested by these uncommon events; and, on a favorable occasion, earnestly pressed Mr. Tennent for a minute account of what his views and apprehensions were, while he lay in this extraordinary state of suspended animation. He discovered great reluctance to enter into any explanation of his perceptions and feelings at this time; but, being importunately urged to do it, he at length consented, and proceeded with a solemnity not to be described.

"While I was conversing with my brother," said he, "on the state of my soul, and the fears I had entertained for my future welfare, I found myself, in an instant, in another state of existence, under the direction of a superior being who ordered me to follow him. I was accordingly wafted along, I know not how, till I beheld at a distance an ineffable glory, the impression of which on my mind it is impossible to communicate to mortal man. I immediately reflected on my happy change, and thought.—Well, blessed be God! I am safe at last, notwithstanding all my fears. I saw an innumerable host of happy beings, surrounding the inexpressible glory, in acts of adoration and joyous worship; but I did not see any bodily shape or representation in the glorious appearance. I heard things unutterable. I heard their songs and hal-lelu-jahs, of thanksgiving and praise, with unspeakable rap-

ture. I felt joy unutterable and full of glory. I then applied to my conductor, and requested leave to join the happy throng. On which he tapped me on the shoulder, and said, " You must return to the earth." This seemed like a sword through my heart. In an instant I recollect to have seen my brother standing before me, disputing with the doctor. The three days during which I had appeared lifeless, seemed to me not more than ten or twenty minutes.— The idea of returning to this world of sorrow and trouble, gave me such a shock, that I fainted repeatedly." He added, " Such was the effect on my mind of what I had seen and heard, that if it be possible for a human being to live entirely above the world and the things of it, for some time afterwards I was that person. The ravishing sounds of the songs and hal-lleujahs that I heard, and the very words that were uttered, were not out of my ears, when awake, for at least three years. All the kingdoms of the earth were in my sight as nothing and vanity ; and so great were my ideas of heavenly glory, that nothing which did not, in some measure, relate to it, could command my serious attention." *

It is not surprising, that after so affecting an account, strong solicitude should have been felt for further information as to the

Monmouth, New Jersey, }
December 10, 1805. }

" Dear Sir,

" Agreeably to your request, I now send you in writing the remarkable account, which I sometime since gave you verbally, respecting your good friend, my worthy predecessor, the late Rev. William Tennent, of this place. In a very free and feeling conversation on religion, and on the future rest and blessedness of the people of God, (while travelling together from Monmouth to Princeton) I mentioned to Mr. Tennent that I should be highly gratified in hearing, from his own mouth, an account of the *Trance* which he was said to have been in, unless the relation would be disagreeable to himself. After a short silence, he proceeded, saying, that he had been sick with a fever ; that the fever increased, and he by degrees sunk under it. After some time (as his friends informed him) he died, or appeared to die, in the same manner as persons usually do ; that in laying him out, one happened to draw his hand under the left arm, and perceived a small tremor in the flesh ; that he was laid out, and was cold and stiff. The time for his funeral was appointed and the people collected ; but a young doctor, his particular friend, pleaded with great earnestness that he might not then be buried, as the tremor under the arm continued ; that his brother, Gilbert, became impatient with the young gentleman, and said to him, ' What ! a man not dead who is cold and stiff as a stake ! ' The importunate young friend, however, prevailed ; another day was appointed for the burial and the people separated. During this interval many means were made use of to discover, if possible, some symptoms of life, but none appeared excepting the tremor. The doctor never left him for three nights and three days— The people again met to bury him,

* The author has been particularly solicitous to obtain every confirmation of this extraordinary event in the life of Mr. Tennent. He, accordingly, wrote to every person he could think of, likely to have conversed with Mr. T. on the subject. He received several answers ; but the following letter from the worthy successor of Mr. Tennent, in the pastoral charge of his church, will answer for the author's purpose.

words, or at least the subjects of praise and adoration, which Mr. Tennent had heard. But when he was requested to commun-

but could not even then obtain the consent of his friend, who pleaded for one hour more ; and when that was gone, he pleaded for half an hour, and then for a quarter of an hour : when, just at the close of this period, on which hung his last hope, Mr. Tennent opened his eyes. They then pried open his mouth, which was stiff, so as to get a quill into it, through which some liquid was conveyed into the stomach, and he by degrees recovered.

" This account, as intimated before, Mr. Tennent said he had received from his friends. I said to him, " Sir, you seem to be one indeed raised from the dead, and may tell us what it is to die, and what you were sensible of while in that state " He replied in the following words : " As to dying—I found my fever increase, and I became weaker and weaker until, *all at once*, I found myself in heaven, as I thought. I saw no shape as to the Deity, *but glory all unutterable !*" Here he paused, as though unable to find words to express his views, let his bridle fall, and lifting up his hands, proceeded, " I can say, as St. Paul did, I heard and I saw things all unutterable ! I saw a great multitude before this glory, apparently in the height of bliss, singing most melodiously. I was transported with my own situation, viewing all my troubles ended and my rest and glory begun, and was about to join the great and happy multitude, when one came to me, looked me full in the face, laid his hand upon my shoulder, and said, " You must go back." These words went through me ; nothing could have shocked me more ; I cried out, Lord, must I go back ! With this shock I opened my eyes in this world. When I saw I was in the world I fainted, then came to, and fainted for several times, as one probably would naturally have done in so weak a situation."

cate these, he gave a decided negative, adding, " You will know them, with many other particulars hereafter, as you will find the whole among my papers ;" alluding to his intention as leaving the writer hereof his executor, which precluded any further solicitation. *

" Mr. Tennent further informed me that he had so entirely lost the recollection of his past life, and the benefit of his former studies that he could neither understand what was spoken to him, nor write, nor read his own name. That he had to begin all anew, and did not recollect that he had ever read before, until he had again learned his letters and was able to pronounce the monosyllables, such as *thee* and *thou*. But, that as his strength returned, which was very slowly, his memory also returned. Yet, notwithstanding the extreme feebleness of his situation, his recollection of what he saw and heard while in heaven, as he supposed, and the sense of divine things, which he had there obtained, continued all the time in their full strength, so that he was continually in something like an ecstacy of mind. ' And,' said he, ' for three years, the sense of divine things continued so great, and every thing else appeared so completely vain, when compared to heaven, that could I have had the world for stooping down for it, I believe I should not have thought of doing it.' "

* It was so ordered, in the course of divine Providence, that the writer was sorely disappointed in his expectation of obtaining the papers here alluded to. Such, however, was the will of heaven ! Mr. Tennent's death happened during the revolutionary war, when the enemy separated the writer from him, so as to render it impracticable to attend him on a dying bed ; and before it was possible to get to his house, after his death, (the writer being with the American army at the Valley

The pious and candid reader is left to his own reflections on this very extraordinary occurrence. The facts have been stated, and they are unquestionable. The writer will only ask, whether it be contrary to revealed truth, or to reason, to believe, that in every age of the world instances like that which is here recorded, have occurred, to furnish *living testimony* of the reality of the invisible world, and of the infinite importance of eternal concerns ?

(To be continued.)

EDITORIAL REMARKS.

Many of the pious people in Connecticut, have heard their fathers, who now sleep in the grave with Mr. Tennent, speak in such high terms of his ardent zeal, and the divine power which attended his ministry in his travels abroad, that every thing respecting his memory, creates in them a great interest. Doubtless it is from this cause, that many applications have been made, for the re-publication in this Magazine, of the Biographical Sketches concerning him, first published at Philadelphia, in the Missionary Magazine of the General Assembly. Certain singular events in his life have increased this curiosity, one of which is the *trance*, related in

Forge) his son came from Charleston, and took his mother, and his father's papers and property, and returned to Carolina. About fifty miles from Charleston, the son was suddenly taken sick and died among entire strangers; and never since, though the writer was also left executor to the son, could any trace of the father's papers be discovered by him.

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our present Number. While the Editor is sensible the relation may be misused by visionary minds to their own hurt; he cannot discredit either the sound judgment or piety of the gentlemen under whose direction the original publication was made. The account is indeed extraordinary, but it is not the first instance of apparent suspended animation, under strong mental impression. If the joys and sorrows which are worldly may produce such an effect; why not those that are spiritual and heavenly, which are both more interesting and glorious? Doubtless human imagination may intermix false apprehensions, with the most important truth, and it is the business of reason to make the separation in view of all the attending circumstances.

Although the trance is no new evidence of the being of God, of a heaven and an eternity; yet it is evidence of the strength with which the Spirit of God may sometimes impress divine truth on the mind while it is still connected with a frail body. This is a fact which infidels are ready to deny. The important question is, what is truth? This must be learned from the law and the testimony. If Mr. Tennent had asserted any thing new concerning God or heaven, which the holy scriptures do not warrant, we should have supposed he was not then a subject of impressions from the Holy Spirit, and that the whole was a delusion; but no such thing appears from the account. Deep humility, ardent zeal in the cause of Christ, and an uncommon sense of the glory of God and of heaven appear to have been the

effects on his own mind, and what Christian would not wish to excel in these ! At the same time, we cannot but warn men, who wish to be deceived by strange things, that trances are not religion. It is not the strength of impressions on the mind, or of affections within it ; but their moral nature, by which piety and hypocrisy must be discriminated. The effects wrought on the body are a thing of little consequence, nor is the singularity of them any evidence they are wrought by the Holy Spirit ; unless the consequence of them is to take away sin, and increase a love of God, as his character is described in his holy word. No one ought to suppose that Mr. Tennent was actually carried to heaven ; but that he had such views of spiritual things as he had conceived could be had in no other place beside heaven. In such a case it is not strange he should be mistaken concerning the place, while he was certain of the views.

On the whole, what may we conclude from this scene of entrancement ? Not that the whole was a delusion. Not that any thing was added by the trance, either to the excellence or evidence of divine truth ; or that it is to be judged by any other rules, than such impressions of the Spirit as are often experienced by good people : but, that views of truth may be such, by a divine operation on the mind, as wholly to overpower the body ; in which case it is less capable of distinguishing between reality and imagination. Infinite wisdom may see such impressive views of truth to be suitable means for assisting his people, to

resist powerful temptations, or to prepare them for extraordinary and difficult duty.



Memoirs of the Rev. Ammi Ruhannah Robbins, late pastor of the Church of Christ in Norfolk.

TO THE EDITOR,

Rev. Sir,

At the request of my brethren in the Ministry, I transmit you the enclosed memoirs for publication in the "Evangelical Magazine" for the month of December ; and am with much esteem and respect your friend and humble servant,

CHAUNCEY LEE.

Colebrook, Nov. 17th, 1813.

SO comparatively few are the examples of living virtue worthy to be recorded for posthumous imitation, that to eulogize the dead, is but rarely the duty of the biographer. And even in garnishing the sepulchres of the prophets, great caution is needful both to the writer and reader, against the almost imperceptible influence of sinister motives. Yet the memory of the just is blessed. A due respect to the characters of the pious dead, whose lives have been a constant lesson of important instruction to mankind, is a debt we owe to the interests of the living. We are to "mark the perfect man and behold the upright."

The aged and venerable personage, the subject of the following memoirs, whose praise is in all the churches, was a son of

the Rev. Philemon Robbins, a former pastor of the church in Bransford. He was born in that town on the 25th of August, O. S. 1740. He evidenced the important benefits of religious parental instruction, by becoming a subject, and example of early piety. He dated his conversion near the beginning of his Collegiate life. Having completed his literary education at Yale College, he received the honors of that university, in the year 1760. Theological knowledge being his most favorite object, and the gospel ministry, the profession to which he chose to devote his life; after a term of preparative studies, under the instruction of the Rev. Dr. Bellamy, he commenced a preacher of the gospel; and by the call of the church and society in Norfolk, was ordained to the pastoral office in that town, on the 28th of October, 1761. There, with few interruptions in his sacred work, he hath bestowed with unwearied diligence, and uncommon usefulness, the services of a long life, amounting to the term of fifty-two years of ministerial labor, and closed his earthly course on Sabbath the 31st of October, 1813,--aged seventy-three years. An aged widow, and eight children lament their loss in his death. His funeral was attended on the Tuesday following by a number of the neighboring clergy, and a very large collection of people from that and the adjacent towns; and a sermon delivered by the Rev. Chauncey Lee, from 2 Kings ii. 12. *My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.* The occasion was very interesting and affect-

ing, and an unusual solemnity appeared throughout the numerous assembly. A death which drew forth the tears of community, and covered every countenance with the sadness of special mourners, presented a scene both solemn and instructive. It was fitted to impress upon the serious and attentive mind, a deep, if not an overwhelming sense of eternal realities.

In Mr. Robbins' first settlement at Norfolk, was exhibited a singular instance of a young minister and a young people. He was but just turned of twenty-one when he received ordination, and the town was an infant settlement: twenty-three members only composed the church, and sixty families the whole town. The hardships and privations, embarrassments and distresses, incidental to the ministerial life, in such a situation; and to which this young soldier of the cross, for a course of years was necessarily subjected, were many and great: yet he endured them with patience and fortitude; cheerfully shared in all the wants, troubles, and trials of his flock; and gradually grew up with the people whom he had thus early and affectionately taken by the hand. By his prudence and frugality, and especially by his industrious application, and extraordinary exertions to do good; particularly, in preparing many young gentlemen for a collegiate education; he has been enabled to rear a numerous and respectable family, three of whom have received a liberal education. His life and usefulness were lengthened out, much beyond the usual term of ministerial service. His labors

have been greatly blessed, and his heart animated and encouraged in his work, not only by individual conversions from time to time occurring, and a gradual and constant increase of his church; but by three special rich, and glorious harvests of souls, which he has been given to reap, in the field of his ministerial labors. He was spared, strengthened, and furnished to feed the church of God, and to teach two whole generations the way to heaven. In reply to the following remark, made to him, a few years since, by the writer of these memoirs, "How happy are you, Mr. Robbins, in your people—so united as they are—so attached to your person, and so attentive to your ministry!" "Oh," said the good man, with the tear of parental affection glistening in his eye, "the people of Norfolk are my children—I have buried all their fathers, and have brought them up from their infancy."

Two years since he delivered to his people, his half Century sermon; taking for his text, those words of the Apostle in **Acts xxvi. 22, 23.** "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets, and Moses did say should come; that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles." The history of his ministerial life, being blended with that of the town, I need only refer to his aforesaid excellent sermon in print; in which the historical incidents of minister, church and

society are sufficiently detailed.

For a number of the last months of his life, he was unable to perform public duties.—He was attacked with a cancerous tumor in his face, which continually increased, till it terminated in his death. Great and distressing, at times, were his bodily pains in his last sickness, yet he appeared to endure them with Christian patience and submission. With his reason unimpaired to the last, he was able to converse, and to give much important counsel to his family and friends, until within a few hours of his death. Then, like the venerable patriarch of old, he died with all his children around his bed, and exhibited that most sublime and interesting spectacle on earth—an aged Christian expiring in the arms of faith.

Two weeks before his death, the writer asked him this question, "Are you not desirous with Paul, to depart and be with Christ?" To which, raising his trembling hands, he replied, "I have strong attachments to earth—I love my wife as my nearest earthly friend—I love my children dearly—I love my people, and I never before so sensibly loved all mankind: but, unless I am greatly deceived, I do love my Saviour, more and above all earthly friends and connections. Oh, it is a heaven worth dying for, to see Christ, as he is."

His views appeared to brighten, and his spiritual comforts to increase, as he drew nearer the close of life, though he became less and less able to converse. Some expressions he uttered to his children, though in a broken

and desultory manner, on the day but one, and the day immediately before his death, and which were faithfully penned at the time, are still more interesting and distinctive of the Christian character. "If, said he, I know my own heart, all is right—but I am afraid of self-deceit. Christ has employed me as a laborer for him, but I have been a poor unfaithful one—my good works are of no value—they are nothing, and I deserve nothing for them. It I have been an instrument in God's hands, the praise is his, not mine. It is he that builds the kingdom. If I may work in it, besure it is a privilege for which I desire to thank God my Saviour. I do hope in Christ my Saviour, and trust he will not forsake me, when I go down through the dark valley. I shall be dismissed in a few days. I think I can see the other side of Jordan. Then I shall be cleansed from sin—how beautiful it is to be cleansed from sin—Oh, how desirable to be freed from this body of death. I think I have a spirit of prayer. I heartily pray for you my children—I pray for the whole world. I fear to express all my feelings, lest I should appear ostentatious; but many times I have glorious discoveries of the heavenly world. I have got nearer home. I hope soon to see my dear friends in heaven—many of my dear people—my parents—my brother,*—my sisters; and one whom I wish still more to see."—Making a solemn pause, he was asked, *whom?* "Christ," he replied. "When

you see me gasping, do not, do not dishonor God." At one time, he exclaimed, in the words of a favorite poetical extract:

"Come death, shake hands, I'll kiss thy bands,
"Tis half pinesse for me to die;
What! dost thou think, that I will shrink?
I'll go to immortality."

With respect to his character as a man, a Christian, and a minister, it is believed, there is but one opinion; nor will envy itself so far detract from his merits, as to refuse him a high and honorable standing in the list of the excellent of the earth. The character of a faithful servant of God, we have reason to think, is not misapplied to him; when lamenting his death we unitedly cry, in the words of the prophet, *My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.* He was indeed a child of Adam, and therefore not free from imperfections. His own sinfulness however, he appeared deeply to feel and lament; and he professed to found all his hopes of divine acceptance, in mere sovereign mercy, through the atoning blood of the Lamb of God.

As a companion, his society and conversation were engaging, edifying, and instructive. His address was peculiarly pleasing, kind, and conciliatory; manifesting a mind richly stored with the treasures of divine knowledge, and a heart warmed with the love of God and his Saviour. In all the various relations of domestic life, as a husband, a parent, a brother, a neighbor, and a friend, he constantly manifested the most kind and tender

* The late Rev. Dr. Robbins, of Plymouth, Massachusetts.

affection, in a conscientious discharge of duty, animated and directed by the principles, precepts, and promises of the holy word of God.

As a preacher of the everlasting gospel, his talents were distinguished—uniting ease and elegance, with plainness and pungency ; and happily adapted to please, to persuade, to convince, to instruct, and to edify his hearers. He was a scribe well instructed in the things of the kingdom of God. His tongue was as the pen of a ready writer. He appeared in the fulness of the blessings of the glorious gospel—a son of consolation to the broken hearted penitent, and a Bonnerges to the stupid conscience of the impenitent sinner. Always attentive to the concerns of his people, and desirous to promote their best interests, his labors have been instant, in season, and out of season. In ministering to the sick and afflicted; in preaching lectures, attending conferences, prayer-meetings, funerals, and all religious occasions; in visiting the families of his people, kindly soothing their sorrows, and rejoicing with them in all their joys; in frequenting the schools, and catechising the dear lambs of his flock; in instructing, and guiding, the awaked, the convicted, and the converted sinner; in healing divisions; exercising the discipline of the gospel; assisting his brethren in the ministry; serving in the public counsels of the churches; and laboring for vacant and destitute parishes, how diligent, unwearied, faithful, and useful he has been, in all these various branches of ministerial duties; are subjects too exten-

sively known and appreciated to need public recital. To many, they will long be the themes of admiring and grateful recollection. But, alas !

“ How lov'd, how valu'd once, avails him not.”

Neither talents, nor learning, nor office, nor piety, nor usefulness afford any security from the shafts of death; any indemnity from the all-devouring grave.—“ The fathers where are they, and the prophets do they live for ever ?” He has finished his earthly course—finished the ministry he received of the Lord Jesus, and gone to his everlasting home. His immortal spirit has returned to his God and Judge; escorted, as we humbly trust, by angels to the bosom of Abraham; and welcomed by the voice of redeeming love, to the bright and blessed abodes of them that sleep in Jesus.—While all must unite to lament the removal of this excellent man of God; the trembling friends of Zion, with their eyes raised to heaven, and their hearts fixed on covenant mercy, will unitedly cry, “ Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, for the faithful fail from among the children of men.”

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Christian Edification.

TO edify primarily signifies to build; and edification primarily signifies the progress made in building. Architecture is one of the fine arts, and the structure of a large and elegant building is one of the greatest monuments of human power and skill. It is, therefore, with pe-

cular propriety and beauty that the sacred writers so often speak of the increase and enlargement of the church, under the metaphor of building up Zion, of building up the walls of Jerusalem, and of edifying the body of Christ. The chief things, which constitute the strength, convenience, beauty, and durability of a building, are its foundation, its design, its materials, and its furniture. The strength of a building chiefly depends upon the magnitude and solidity of its foundation. If these are wanting in the foundation, the superstructure cannot be stable or magnificent. The convenience of a building greatly depends upon the wisdom displayed in planning its various parts. The durability of a building greatly depends upon the quality of the materials, of which it is formed. And the beauty of a building greatly depends upon its external decorations and internal furniture. It would be easy to show, that in all these respects there is a great similarity between a beautiful building and the church of Christ, which is the living temple of the Lord. But in our present attention to this pleasant and important subject, it is proposed to show how the members of a Christian church ought to promote their spiritual edification, and also to offer some reasons to enforce this duty. And here I would observe,

That they ought to edify one another by maintaining and promoting the knowledge of truth. Upon truth the church of Christ is founded. It could not stand if it were not built upon this foundation. Truth, indeed, is

of an extensive signification; but in the writings of the apostles, it usually signifies the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. The truth means the gospel of truth, or that system of truths which the gospel reveals and inculcates, and which every true believer embraces as far as his knowledge extends. As every Christian church is built upon the great and fundamental truths of the gospel; so the promoting the knowledge of these doctrines directly tends to strengthen the very foundation of a church.—Hence the apostle says to the Ephesians, “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” And the apostle Jude exhorts Christians “to build up themselves in their most holy faith.” Every Christian church ought to make continual advances and improvements in the knowledge of the great truths of the gospel. The gospel is put into their hands, and other means of instruction, for this very purpose, that they may become more and more perfect in the knowledge of divine truth. They ought to be continually seeking after clearer and more extensive views of the great scheme of redemption and of those distinguishing doctrines, which lie at the foundation of it. They ought to search the

scriptures, and employ every other proper method, to obtain greater and greater degrees of divine knowledge. They have no reason to rest in any present attainments, but abundant reason to press forward, and make more rapid advances in searching into the deep things of God, which the gospel unfolds. And as each member of the church ought to seek instruction for his own mind, so he ought to be able and disposed to instruct the minds of others. The apostle blames Christians for their negligence in promoting the knowledge of divine truths in themselves and others; and upbraids them for their ignorance, that when they ought to have been able to teach others, they themselves needed to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God. Would all the members of a church properly exert themselves to obtain and diffuse divine knowledge, they might greatly edify one another, and become valiant for the truth.

The members of a church ought to promote their mutual edification, by cultivating union among themselves. The strength of a building greatly consists in having its parts properly connected, united, or cemented together. So union in a Christian church serves to give peculiar strength and stability. It ought, therefore, to be their constant endeavor to cultivate greater union in sentiment and practice. The apostle Paul abundantly inculcated it upon Christians to promote the most entire union. To the Corinthians he says—“ Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the

same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” The gospel contains a perfect rule of faith and practice. And a perfect conformity to that rule would perfectly unite the members of any church in their sentiments, affections, and conduct. And hence there is proper ground of encouragement to Christians to promote their mutual union.—They may all contribute to the attainment of this desirable object, by cultivating the spirit, and performing the duties, which the gospel requires. They would make great progress in their mutual edification, if they would only become united in holding the same sentiments, speaking the same things, and pursuing the same course of conduct.—There is nothing like union in any body of men, to give them wisdom, strength, zeal, courage, and activity, in promoting their mutual interest and happiness, and in bearing down all opposition. While the first Christians were of one heart and one soul, and mutually engaged to promote each other’s edification, they struck fear and consternation into every soul, that refused to unite with them. Every member of a church may do something to promote union, and this ought to be his constant aim, by walking by the same rule. The members of a church ought to be united in nothing but the truth; but in that they ought to be perpetually united. And this may be the case, though all have not the same attainments in knowledge and holiness. The strong may strengthen the weak,

and the knowing may enlighten the ignorant. And if the members are mutually united in affection, they will thus mutually edify one another, by being joined together in the same mind, and in the same practice.

The members of a church ought to promote their mutual edification by cultivating mutual peace. The apostle plainly intimates that the cultivation of peace tends to the edification of Christians. "Let us follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." Peace is necessary to the edification of any church, which cannot be promoted without it. If Christians would cultivate peace, they must treat one another with justice in all their intercourse and dealings together. This will always prevent any just ground of complaint or uneasiness. This is doing to others, as they would wish others to do to them. And surely Christians ought to observe the immutable rule of justice towards each other, and towards all men. And should they do this, they would so far follow the things that make for peace. There is another thing, which will have the same happy tendency; and that is to treat one another with kindness. The law of kindness is not so definite, as the law of justice. But a benevolent heart will seldom mistake the true import of this law. It is the dictate of Christian benevolence to do all the acts of kindness, which we have either ability or opportunity to do. A benevolent heart will devise benevolent actions. And there are a thousand benevolent actions,

which Christians may do to each other, which no particular law of God or man expressly requires. But these acts of kindness have a peculiar tendency to promote peace among the members of a church, as well as among the rest of mankind.—Brotherly love, as well as brotherly kindness, tends to promote peace among Christian brethren. There may be such acts of kindness, as do not appear to be acts of brotherly love. The act of brotherly love is doing good to the household of faith, because they are the household of faith. Christians should love as brethren, and treat one another with brotherly love; that is, with the love of complacency, and not mere benevolence. When Christians are of one heart and one soul, they love to express their complacency, not only in words, but in actions. Nor does it less tend to promote peace among Christian brethren, to treat one another with faithfulness, by watching over, and rebuking one another for deviations from the path of duty. The neglect of this, the scripture calls hatred; and therefore the doing of this is an act of love. And all expressions of true love tend to peace. While the members of a church thus cultivate peace among themselves, they take one of the best methods to promote their mutual edification. Peace prepares them to open their hearts to each other, and to take pleasure in all the public and private and secret acts of devotion, by which they enlighten each other's minds, strengthen each other's hands, and encourage each other's hearts, in the cause of religion. Again,

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The members of a church ought to promote their mutual edification, by exercising that holy discipline, which Christ has appointed for that purpose. The exercise of discipline towards those who transgress the laws of Christ, tends not to the destruction, but to the edification of the church. And if the members would consult their own edification and benefit, they would not be slack in performing this disagreeable and important duty.—No church is weakened, but strengthened, by keeping itself pure, and casting out those whom the laws of Christ require to be cast out. There is hardly any thing, which contributes more to the edification of a church, than the regular exercise of that discipline over the erroneous and corrupt, which is calculated to lead them to repentance and reformation. Accordingly the apostles frequently called upon the primitive churches to purge from among themselves such corrupt members, lest a little leaven should leaven the whole lump. The same method is still to be taken, in order to promote the edification of a church. It may be added,

The members of a church ought to promote their mutual edification, by promoting their mutual growth in grace. This is distinct from knowledge, union, peace, and external purity. All these things may be in a church, while they are actually declining in vital piety, which is the principal object to be desired and promoted in the church of Christ. None but lively stones are the proper materials of a church, and they ought to be kept lively, and not suffered to grow dull and

dead. There are many ways in which Christians may quicken and animate one another in their religious course; and they ought to take every method in their power to cause one another to flourish in the court-yards of their God, and to bring forth much fruit to his glory. Perfection in holiness is the ultimate object, to which every individual in a church ought to desire to bring himself, and the whole body to which he belongs. All the religious advantages, which God has given to his church are to be improved to this ultimate end. Hence the apostle says to the Corinthians, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members one of another. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts, and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way." And this he says, is charity, or that disinterested love, which is the essence and perfection of holiness. And for the promotion of this, every member of a church ought to exert all his power and influence.

It is next proposed to offer some reasons, why the members of a church should be engaged in promoting their mutual edification. And in the first place, they are expressly required in the word of God to do it. The apostles had their hands much engaged to promote the edification

of the churches, which they had planted. They preached and wrote much to strengthen, and adorn the churches of Christ, that the cause of Christ through their instrumentality might be promoted. Paul solemnly declares, that he had sought the edification of the Corinthians. He says "think ye, that we excuse ourselves unto you? We speak before God in Christ; but *we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.*" Hence the apostle so frequently exhorts and commands Christians to edify one another. In one place he says—"Let us follow after the things that make for peace, and the things wherewith one may edify another." Again, he commands the Corinthians in the strongest terms to seek their mutual edification. "Seek that ye may *excel to the edifying of the church.*" And again—"Let all things be done unto edifying." To the Ephesians he says, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers." And to the Thessalonians he says—"Comfort yourselves together, and *edify one another, even as also ye do.*" These exhortations and commands bind present as well as primitive Christians, to promote their mutual edification. They are not to forget, nor neglect this peculiar and important duty. For churches need as much edification now as ever they did. And so long as they exist in this evil world, much needs to be done to edify and establish them upon a firm and unmoveable foundation. Again—*The members of a church ought*

to promote their mutual edification because they were formed into a church-state for this important purpose. Could Christians have edified one another as distinct and separate individuals, as well as by being united, there is no reason to think Christ would have commanded them to name his name, and give up themselves to each other as well as to the Lord. He knew that by being united by the bond of a solemn covenant, to assemble together, to pray and praise, to hear the gospel and commemorate his dying love, as well as to observe the discipline of his house they might be greater helpers of each other's joy, zeal, activity and usefulness. And for this reason he instituted a visible church, which might with one hand and one heart, promote their own mutual benefit, be a light to the world, and the peculiar instrument of awakening and converting sinners. Hence they cannot answer the great end of their institution, without seeking and laboring to promote their mutual edification. This is a powerful reason for their doing all in their power to build themselves up in their most holy faith. Besides, if they do not seek to promote their mutual edification they will *counteract* the great and good design of their church-state. For by being united in such a state, they have an opportunity to do much more to injure and destroy one another than they could as separate and unconnected individuals. And there is no other alternative before them, but either to edify, or destroy one another for whom Christ died. But they cannot hesitate, which of these modes of conduct is

their indispensable duty. They must endeavor to edify and save one another. And they must do every thing to promote this end, that their abilities, situations, and opportunities enable them to do for this purpose. They are set in the body to promote the good of the body, and one cannot say to another—"I have no need of thee, nor, will I assist thee in thy Christian course."— Again.. The members of a church have solemnly covenanted with God and one another to promote their mutual edification. The church receives every member under the expectation that he would be a faithful brother and seek the good of the body. And every member solemnly promises to be a faithful brother, and contribute all in his power to promote the edification of all his brethren in covenant. These vows and engagements continually bind the whole church to seek each other's edification, by aiding and assisting one another, in making advances in Christian knowledge, and in every Christian and divine grace. And such vows, in connection with the commands of Christ, and the great design of the institution of his church, lay all the members of a church under the highest obligations conceivable, to make their mutual edification the object of all their designs and exertions.

If the members of a church will do their duty, in promoting their mutual edification, those who are without cannot hurt them ; but by neglecting, or counteracting their duty they may destroy themselves. It is a great thing to be a member of a church. It is a great privilege

and advantage, which may be improved or abused. There is a high responsibility attached to this relation. A church ought to be cautious whom they admit to their communion, both with respect to their sentiments and to their sincerity ; yet every pure Christian will wish to join himself to a church both to do and to get good. Such members as manifest a desire and endeavor to promote the edification of the church, give evidence of their sincerity. This is one of the best evidences of their growing in grace. The subject calls upon the members of churches to examine themselves respecting the important object of Christian edification. Let them enquire, whether they are careful and constant in assembling themselves with the church. Let them enquire, whether they are engaged in promoting the knowledge of the truth, in promoting union and peace, order and growth in grace. Let every member of a church, who has been faulty, reform. And let the faithful persevere.



MR. EDITOR,

If you approve of the following Letter from a Young Lady to a Clergyman, containing an account of her Christian experience, please to give it a place in your next Number of the Magazine.

A. D.

Nov. 1813.

C....., Dec. 1803.

REV. SIR,

AGREEABLE to your kind proposal, and request, I transmit for your perusal these few lines, re-

lative to my experience in religion, and conversion thereto ; being very desirous of advice and instruction upon this all-important subject, and prompted by the idea you suggested, that by thus complying with your request, you would be better able to judge, and form an opinion of what advice, proper to give.

Relying on your goodness to pardon my many imperfections, in my way of writing, and to correct all errors and mistakes ; and by thus submitting to your better judgment, hope it will be of service to my improvement in the knowledge of divine things, and thereby conducive to my happiness here, and hereafter, which induceth me to make the attempt, although in a very imperfect manner.

From my earliest age, I endeavored to lead a moral life, being often taught that God would punish sinners, but did not think that I should suffer for the few offences, of which I had been guilty. But, notwithstanding, the thoughts of death were very irksome, and frequently troubled and affected me very much ; particularly, at one time, several years since, being on a visit at Lebanon ; there was at that time some attention to religion in that place—on attending a religious conference, they appeared very solemn and attentive, which very much affected me ; but more particularly in reading the accounts of the memoirs, published in the Evangelical Magazine, consisting of a short sketch of their lives spent in the religious duties and services, together with the happiness they experienced at death, in the comforts and consolations

of religion ; producing in them an entire resignation to the will of God, in the hope of the promises and joys offered them in the gospel, through the merits of the Redeemer, met triumphant their last enemy, even death, spoken of in scripture, as the King of terrors. Methought it very desirable to die such a death, and with Balaam desired to die “the death of the righteous, that my last end might be like his ;” and even wondered how it was they obtained such clear and lively hopes of pardon and acceptance with God in the enjoyment of endless felicity.—But observing the hopes they entertained were produced by exercising faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, through a belief of the promises of God in him ; thinking that I believed the scriptures, of course believed in Christ, not insensible however, of my want of those lively affections of love and joy in God, thought something must be done further, in order to attain to such a happy temper of mind : thought of the duty of prayer, which I had never done excepting in using a form as a little child : but, indeed, I knew not how to pray, nor what to pray for as I ought ; but, however, prayed that God would be merciful to me a sinner ; but fearing that it did not proceed from my heart in sincerity, and thinking that I had not been guilty of any sin worthy of everlasting punishment, and that I had avoided many sins which I saw in others ; consequently, fancied myself a favorite of heaven, of course, nothing to fear. And thus I continued, for some time, neglecting to pray, for fear that I should

not perform it in an acceptable manner, and trusting in a mere speculative belief of the scriptures, thinking that such cases as the above recorded in the Magazine were very rare, and seldom to be found, even amongst the professed Christians : but hoped however, that by continuing in the belief of the scriptures, and by observing a due respect to all the commandments of God, I should at least, feel willing and resigned to death, whenever it should please the disposer of all events to call me to the exchange of worlds. And, likewise, at another time, preceding this, my mind was a good deal affected upon hearing you, Sir, preach one evening, from these words—" As the heart panteth after the water-brook, so panteth my soul after thee, O God!"—But having no steady preaching here in this place, and there being no special attention here, at least to my knowledge, and not liking to dwell long on so gloomy a subject as death, my former impressions were soon obliterated, and produced no lasting effects. Thus, in the manner above stated, I continued some time, for the most part, tolerably easy, until this spring and summer, in the year 1808 ; at the time of the awakening up town, my attention was quite excited in hearing you converse upon the awakenings and reformation there, and in other places ; and likewise, by your apparent happiness in religion ; but more particularly, by your questioning me personally upon the subject, with respect to my own mind ; which very much embarrassed me ; it being the first time that I ever had such a question pro-

posed. Indeed, I could not make much of a reply, excepting that I had thought of it, and considered it necessary, and very desirable. But it was not very pleasing to me, being sensible that I was not in the happy possession of it ; but liked to hear it conversed upon in general terms. Having no conviction of sin, I could not view myself in a state of condemnation. But considering, that I had entertained such like pre-conceived ideas long enough, that they had proved very unsatisfactory, therefore felt resolved to persevere this once for all, and give no further heed to them ; if possible to obtain that religion whereby I could feel willing and resigned to death ; reflecting upon the uncertainty of life, and the certainty of death, consequently, the necessity of being immediately prepared, and the happiness resulting from such a preparation, exemplified in the characters above mentioned.—But notwithstanding my resolution, I found my heart was no less opposed, nor my aversion to the work in the least diminished. Finding the obstacles in the way so many and the work so great, that I needed the divine assistance which led me to implore the divine interposition in these words, " Turn thou me, and I shall be turned ;" and likewise, for my encouragement meditated upon these promises in the sacred scriptures, " draw near to God, and he will draw near to you ; seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you ; for he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened ; for he hath not said to the seed of Ja-

eb, seek ye my face in vain." Considering that in order to expect, or meet with a blessing, I must be in the use of all the appointed means of acquiring knowledge and grace; therefore was resolved to give my mind wholly to reading the scriptures and other pious books, and likewise to the duty of self-examination, and to reform, in whatever I found amiss, and to attend upon the word preached and to hear as for my life; reflecting how often I had attended upon the public worship of God, and heard as though I heard not, with little or no concern; thinking that it applied to some other one, and even, when professedly joining with the people of God, in prayer, my heart had been far from him; that truly I had been of that class spoken of in scripture, who drew near to God with their mouth, and honored him with their lips, while, indeed, their heart was far from him; and that God seeth not as man seeth; man looketh at the outward appearance, but God searcheth the heart. And likewise, reflecting upon the goodness of God, and upon the many mercies which I had received, particularly the comfortable measure of health that I had been favored with, and a competency of the necessaries of life, and the enjoyment of kind friends; and reflecting how little I had thought of Him, from whom I had received so many great and numberless favors, and mercies; and, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift; that he had not been in all my thoughts, that truly I had lived without God in the world, and that "when I knew

him, I glorified him not as God," being unthankful. Having such a sense of my ingratitude to God, resolved to live a better life, more prayerful, thoughtful, and thankful to him for the future; and to devote the remainder of my spared life to his service; and to love him agreeable to the first command of all, which is "thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength;" considering how reasonable, right and just it was, that God should make such a requirement of his rational creatures. Thus going about to establish my own righteousness; and hoped by thus repenting, reforming, and continuing, I should feel willing to die. But notwithstanding all my endeavors after perfect obedience, found by experience that I came short in all the duties; that while attending upon the word preached, particularly when joining in prayer, was very much troubled with wandering thoughts, and knew not what to do; I strove against them, but in vain, wholly to extirpate them for any length of time; for, before I was aware, the first thing I knew, my thoughts, like the fool's eye, would be to the ends of the earth. Thus perplexed, I knew not what to do, for alas! I could no further go; for I had sought and strove, but found not, knocked but it had not been opened; nothing, however, but thick darkness spread over my mind, and I had endeavored to draw near unto him in his appointed means, but still found myself no nearer, but farther off, and had endeavored to

love and serve him with all my heart, and agreeable to the divine requirement, but still he appeared not to regard me.

But reflecting, that I was harboring hard thoughts of God, and that must be very, very unjust, as well as dangerous, therefore, endeavored to extirpate them by considering, that possibly I had asked amiss, or, that my motives were not good; and if so, that God saw it fit not to answer them; of course the fault must be in me, as I had found that had been the case, heretofore.—Near this time, I heard you preach one evening lecture from Jonah ii. 4.—“Then I said I am cast out of thy sight, yet I will look again towards thy holy temple.”—Which text, and discourse I thought very applicable to my case, and though like Jonah, seemingly cast from his presence, yet I would look again, towards his holy temple; and persevere in the use of all means, and patiently wait upon God for a blessing, in the light of his countenance; and me thought took more satisfaction in the things of religion, than in any thing of a worldly nature; and did not wish to hear any thing conversed upon but religion; and, even wondered why Christians did not talk more upon the subject, and particularly to me; but thought it just enough that I should be deprived of that, which heretofore, had been so disagreeable to me; likewise felt very desirous that every body should pray for me; for indeed, I could not pray myself, but sought every opportunity of joining with others, and several times, almost prevailed on to ask for your prayers, but through

dissidence, was deterred; and took great satisfaction in having you attend the singing-schools, and to conclude with a prayer, and thought it far the best part; and even wondered how they could laugh and appear so merry after singing such striking words, and hearing such solemn prayers.

Truly, my mind was very intent upon serious subjects; I wished to be reading constantly, the scriptures particularly, the psalms of David, the most devotional part of them, together with Dr. Watts' psalms and hymns, particularly, the 101st, entitled, “Repentance from a sense of divine goodness, or a complaint of ingratitude.”

“ Is this the kind return,
Are these the thanks we owe,
Thus to abuse eternal love
Whence all our blessings flow !”—

And likewise the 47th, Hymn—
“ Praise for the blessings of Providence and Grace.”

“ Almighty Father, Gracious Lord;
Kind Guardian of my days,
Thy mercies, let my heart record
In songs of grateful praise.”—

And the 49th—entitled “ Indwelling sin lamented.”

“ With tears of anguish, I lament,
Here at thy feet, my God
My passion, pride, and discontent,
And vile ingratitude.

Sure there was ne'er a heart so base
So false as mine has been;
So faithless to its promises,
So prone to every sin !

Break, sovereign grace, O break the
charm,
And set the captive free:
Reveal, Almighty God, thine arm,
And haste to rescue me.”

I selected these, and commit-

ted them to memory to repeat in my leisure moments of retirement, as corresponding with my feelings, and the language of my heart. But, notwithstanding, the thoughts of death were irksome, and even wondered why it was thus with me, that while I took so much satisfaction in religious services, that I felt no more willingness to die, than I usually had done before ;—and still wondered how it was that they obtained such lively hopes ; that being the mark which I had set to try myself by, resolved to pursue the prize, and not to content myself with any thing short of that, if possible to be obtained.—In the mean time Doct. L. gave me an invitation to attend an evening lecture up town sometime in October, which I very thankfully accepted, in hopes that it would be a mean of affording me some light upon that all-important and interesting subject, which, in some degree, had the desired effect. Hearing a sermon preached from these words, by Mr. H. “ Peace I leave with you, peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, give I unto you,” &c. ; together with conversing upon the subject, very much affected me, and produced in my mind a strong desire after reconciliation and peace with God, as the only thing conducive to my happiness here, and hereafter : and even thought, if I was in possession of the whole world, it would afford me no satisfaction, without peace with God ; and with the latter, I could be happy without the former, if ever so adverse : which led me to implore reconciliation with God, in the words of the Psalm-

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ist,—that God would be pleased to lift upon me the light of his countenance, whereby I could obtain true peace of mind.—After retiring, took up the holy Bible to find the text, in order to read the context, in hopes to find some word to comfort my troubled heart and distressed mind : but failed in the attempt, the text being mentioned before I got there ; and I could not recollect in which of the Evangelists it was contained ; therefore, thought I would turn to some portion of the Old Testament, and opened to Isaiah ; and looking along, cast my eye upon the 40th chapter, and read as follows : “ Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God ; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned,” &c.—Truly, it was a word in season : never before did I read with so much delight ; indeed, I had not read but very few verses, before every word appeared to be full of divine beauty ; and thus I continued to read a number of chapters by course, which led me to meditate upon the being of God, and upon his divine attributes, as the supreme Governor of the world, and to rejoice with the Psalmist in his government, and to adopt the words, “ The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof ; though clouds and darkness are round about him, yet righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne,”—and to rejoice that there was such a Being that would judge the world in righteousness, and to delight in the law of God after the inner man ;

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which caused me to view, with astonishment, my past ingratitude, and rebellion against God: reflecting that I had been all that time quarreling against him, and, at the same time, imagining that I loved him, and did his service, and kept his commandments, when quite the reverse: that, truly, the heart was "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked :" that I had been "hewing out to myself cisterns, broken cisterns, that could hold no water :"—that it was not owing to any goodness in me, or that my heart was any better than others, that I had not been guilty of gross immoralities; but to the kind care of Providence, or his restraining grace:—that it was he that had made me to differ, in that respect; but that I was "a child of wrath, even as others ;" and that the carnal mind is enmity against God, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, (as saith the inspired apostle):—that I had been contending with the justice of God, in condemning me, thinking that I had not been guilty of any sin worthy of everlasting punishment: but now I could view myself unworthy of the least of his mercies; and that God would be perfectly just, in punishing me to all eternity, and that he would be glorified in so doing; and that it was of his mercies, that I had not been consumed; because his compassion failed not that I had not been cut down as a cumberer of the ground; and to admire at the long-suffering of God. I had nothing to plead, but for mercy, and with the publican, to smite on my breast, and cry, God be merciful to me, a sinner, a great

sinner, and even the chief of sinners, and to loath and abhor myself on account of sin. Indeed my sense of sin, and load of guilt was so great, that it appeared to me, that I could not long have existed under them, if these texts of scripture had not been brought to my mind, and received by faith:—that Christ died for sinners, the chief of sinners, and even for such an one as I was:—that "he was the way, the truth and the life, and that no man cometh to the Father, but by him :"—whom having not seen I loved, and who, though now I see him not, yet in him I would rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and say with good Simeon of old, in the words of the poet—

" Now let me die like Simeon,
With Christ in my arms :"—

and that well might the Christians rejoice, in the near views of the dissolution of the body, with the hope of their soul's being united to Christ beyond the grave, never to be separated from his delightful presence to all eternity:—that truly, there was enough in him to make even death desirable; and that if it was the will of God to call me hence, to be here no more, that I could feel willing and resigned, and even could rejoice in such an event. Then, it pleased God to grant me the utmost of my desires, and even more than I wished, or even thought of, and at a time when I least expected it,—viewing myself utterly unworthy of such a manifestation of his abundant mercy, and even of the least. Then did my heart arise with incessant thanksgiving and praise to God, and wished

every body to assist me in the delightful employment ; and to call upon my soul, and all my powers, together with the whole creation, to help me to praise the Lord : for indeed, I could not be thankful enough that I had not been left to take up with nothing short of Christ ; and to view the hand of God in all the work, and to give all the glory to the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And with the Psalmist in these words—" Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name : bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits ; who forgiveth all thine iniquities ! O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever :" and that text had been verified in me, as one that stood a living monument of God's forbearance and long-suffering !—" Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men."

Thus, I continued for three or four days successively, constantly in the exercise of such like aspirations of thanksgiving and praise. The Sabbath following heard you preach from these words : " If the ministration of condemnation be glory, how much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory !"—Truly, methought I had found the ministration of condemnation to be glorious, and the ministration of righteousness far exceed in glory. It was a most delightful and interesting subject to me ; never before did I enjoy such a Sabbath ; truly, it was a day, the best of the seven,—and a day spent in the house of God, in such a manner, better, far better, " than a thousand elsewhere."

Truly, the ways of religion are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace : for the favor of God is life, and his loving-kindness better than life.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

An Address to the Christian Public on the Subject of Missions to the Heathen, and Translations of the Scriptures.

IN behalf of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the subscribers, a committee for the purpose, beg leave to solicit the attention of the Christian public to the cause in which the Board is engaged, and for the promotion of which it was originally instituted, and has been since incorporated. We are not backward to state, at the commencement of this address, that we

shall lay before the reader, with great satisfaction, some of the facts and reasons, on which our attachment to this cause is founded, and which, we are sure, will not fail to commend themselves to every enlightened conscience, and to make an impression on every pious heart. The cause itself is transcendently glorious, and deserving of the warmest approbation of all men, however imperfectly, or feebly, we may state its claims. To doubt, or hesitate, in regard to the urgency of these claims, and the duty of keeping them habitually in view, would be equally repugnant to our feelings, and dishonorable to our profession as

Christians. Can it be a matter of doubt, or of indifference, to any man, who has the Scriptures in his hands, and has profited by perusing them, whether Christianity is to become, at some future day, the religion of all mankind? whether its transforming power is universally to influence the hearts and the lives of men? whether the word of God is to be real, understood, and obeyed, by the nations now sunk in idolatry and ignorance?—whether this grand consummation is to be effected by the means which men are voluntarily to supply?—or whether there is an imperious necessity that Christians should zealously co-operate in this great work of the Lord?

The object of the Board is *one*—the promulgation of Christianity among the heathen. The means, by which this object is designed to be effected, are of two kinds:—the publication and distribution of the Scriptures in the different languages of the nations; and the support of faithful missionaries to explain, exemplify, and impress on the mind, the great truths which the Scriptures contain.

In regard to the distribution of the Scriptures, the Board is in fact, though not in name, a **FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY**; and, under this aspect, we earnestly request that its advantages may be considered by all, who would joyfully place the bible in the hands of pagans. Confined in its operations to no part of the globe in exclusion of other parts, the Board can extend the sovereign balm wherever there are spiritual maladies to be healed; enjoying the benefit of established plans of correspondence and co-operation, the result of its proceedings can be more prompt, than could otherwise be expected; and having its attention long fixed on the most promising fields of exertion, its agents will acquire a facility of action, which can never be applied to single, insulated, and sudden efforts. Through the instrumentality of the Board, every charitable person, however retired or obscure, has it in his power to send the bible to those very heathens than whom none of the human race can need it more, and on whom

there are peculiar encouragements to bestow it. A known, regular, uninterrupted channel will be kept open, (with the blessing of Providence,) through which the streams of American beneficence may flow into the centre of the pagan world, and contribute to fertilize regions which have long been dreary and barren of all moral good. And shall not these streams increase, till they form a mighty river, flowing with a steady and resistless current, and bearing on its bosom the immortal hopes of restored Jews, and the imperishable riches of converted Gentiles? Will not many of our countrymen esteem it a high privilege, that their contributions, at whatever season bestowed, may in a few months and without care or trouble to themselves, be so applied, even in the remote eastern hemisphere, as to commence a series of good effects, which shall never end, and the number and magnitude of which no human powers can calculate? A single bible given to a Hindoo, or a Cevlonee, may be the means of enlightening a family, of arousing the attention of a neighborhood, of withdrawing a multitude from Idolatry, leading them to procure the Scriptures for themselves, and turning them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to the living God.

It is a fact highly gratifying to the Board, that the liberality of Christians has devolved on them the duty of remitting, in the course of the year past, bills of exchange to the amount of about *eight hundred and sixty pounds sterling*, to aid in the translation and distribution of the Scriptures in Asia; a sum which will produce as much in India, according to the present rates of exchange from London to Calcutta, as would be produced by remitting four thousand dollars in specie, after deducting from that sum the peace rates of freight and insurance. Though it is a pleasing reflection, that some part of this money may even now have been expended, and contributed to supply the spiritual wants of numbers, yet we are not to forget, that a few thousand Bibles cannot suffice for many millions of inhabitants; that the demand for the word of God

will be more urgent, the more a knowledge of it is disseminated, and that the united efforts of all Christians, in all parts of the world, are demanded, and will be demanded for many years to come, in this single branch of charity.

We might state a multitude of facts, all tending to prove, that the encouragement to distribute the Scriptures in Asia is continually increasing. From the journal kept by Peter, a native missionary of the cross, it appears, that throughout a long journey in Orissa, a part of Hindostan, performed in the Autumn of 1811, he found great numbers of persons, who heard him with attention when he preached, and were very anxious to receive from him copies of the Scriptures. In stating his labors on a particular Lord's day, he says, "some sat down with me for two hours at a time, reading the New Testament and hearing it explained. Others earnestly intreated for a New Testament, or a tract; and when they had obtained their request seemed as glad as if they had gained some rich prize." "At Bhudruka, as well as in the way to it," says the same writer, "I preached Jesus to multitudes. The people seemed so eager for books, that I think I could have distributed a thousand if I had had them." On a subsequent day, he writes thus: "I sat from 12 o'clock till seven in the evening, reading and explaining the word of God. I gave away many tracts; also two Testaments to two very sensible Ooriyas, [i. e. natives of Orissa,] one of whom appeared very serious and attentive, and after I had departed to my lodgings, came and inquired very particularly about the way of salvation."

Two other missionaries write thus: "The poor heathen are much surprised to hear the gracious news of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. You would admire to see with what gladness they accept the Orissa Testaments at our hands.—They say they never thought the Firingees* had such a good book! We

* "That is, the unclean; a name given by them to all who were without cast."

have distributed a considerable number of Testaments in the country, and have had the pleasure of sending one to Pooree, and the Brahmans of Jugunnath [Juggernaut] received it gladly. They wanted to pay for it, but we strictly charged the bearer to present it without taking anything for it."

Important, however, as the distribution of the Scriptures among the heathen, in their own languages, is held to be by us, and by the Christian public generally, it should never be forgotten, that the *preaching of the Gospel* in every part of the earth, is indispensable to the general conversion of mankind.—Though the Scriptures alone have, in many individual cases, been made the instrument of regeneration, yet we have no account of any very extensive diffusion of Christianity, unless where the truths of the Scriptures have been preached.—Were the heathen generally to receive the Scriptures, and anxious to learn divine truth, they would, like the Ethiopian eunuch, apply for instruction to those who had been previously acquainted with the same Scriptures; and when asked if they understood what they had read, would reply, *How can we, except some man should guide us?* The distribution of the Bible excites inquiry, and often leads those who receive that precious book to attend public worship in the sanctuary; but the *preaching of the Gospel* is, after all, the grand mean appointed by Infinite Wisdom for the conversion and salvation of men. Without this, the Scriptures, however liberally distributed, will have comparatively little effect among any people, whether pagan or nominally Christian. This assertion is not only approved by reason, but abundantly confirmed by the history of the Church, and the express declaration of God's word. *Whosoever, says the great apostle to the Gentiles, shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall*

they preach except they be sent? i. e. how shall they proclaim the Gospel to the heathen, or the Jews, unless they go as missionaries? And, as if to show that the circulation of the Scriptures, and the preaching of the Gospel, should go hand in hand, the apostle comes to this conclusion: *So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*—The countries, in which heathenism now prevails, will doubtless be able to furnish themselves with preachers, after Christianity shall have made extensive progress in them; but at the commencement of the Gospel dispensation to those who are entirely ignorant of it, they must for many years receive preachers from Christian nations.

So far as the Board has been engaged in the attempt to establish missions, some unexpected impediments have been thrown in the way. It has been ascertained, however, that Ceylon is open to our exertions; and this is certainly one of the most promising fields in the world for missionary enterprise. At the Isle of France, also, a useful station might be fixed; and hopes are entertained, that a door will be opened for the preachers of the Gospel, in the populous regions near Surat and Bombay. It may also be reasonably hoped and believed, that the missionaries, who remain in the service of the Board, will be improved, and rendered more fit for eminent usefulness, by the trials which they have experienced. So far as can be judged from their letters, the painful dispensations to which we refer have added to their patience, fortitude, and humility, and have attached them more strongly to the cause which they have espoused.

Disappointments in the great work of evangelizing the world are to be expected; but they should never dishearten us, nor cause us to intermit our labors; nor should they induce us to relinquish a particular object, unless they are of a decisive character, or have been many times repeated. Christians have been ready to faint and grow weary under discouragements, in almost all ages of the Church. They would do well to take lessons on this subject from

the men of the world. Does the loss of one ship, or a whole convoy, deter enterprising merchants from entering on a new commerce, which promises, so far as probability is regarded, to become lucrative and successful? Do our farmers abandon fields, which had been prepared for cultivation with great labor, merely because the first crop has not answered their most sanguine expectations? The Christian should feel persuaded, that though a single attempt, or even a series of attempts, to send the Gospel to the heathen should fail; yet not only the experience of the Church from the first promulgation of Christianity to the present time, but the express promises of God in relation to the times still future, afford the strongest encouragement to persevering labors in this cause.

Some persons speak of *missions*, as though they were a new thing in the world; or at least as though they had never done much good to mankind. These persons forget, that Christianity has always been extended by missions, wherever it has been extended at all, with the exception of what has been done in this way by colonization. They forget that all Europe, and large portions of Asia and Africa, have been converted to Christianity by missions; that the primitive preachers of Christianity were almost all missionaries; that the disciples who composed our Lord's household, to whom Matthias and Paul were subsequently added, were named *missionaries*, and have been gloriously distinguished in all succeeding ages, as the *missionaries of Jesus Christ*. They seem ignorant that the word *apostle*, introduced into our language from the Greek, is precisely of the same meaning as our word *missionary*; and that learned divines have regretted, that the word was not translated instead of being thus introduced. They forget that our ancestors in Britain were wretched idolaters, offering human sacrifices, and clinging to the most degrading superstitions, till they were delivered from their miserable bondage by the instrumentality of missionaries. If such mighty transformations were

wrought by the labors of missionaries, when printing was unknown, and there was but little intercourse between nations; when most barbarous nations were subdivided into a multitude of petty states, hostile to each other; when science was in its infancy, and the restraints of law and order were but partially enjoyed; when commerce had but just begun to produce its civilizing effects;—how much more encouragement is there to proceed with vigor in the establishment and support of missions, in these highly favorable times, when the art of printing will enable us to multiply copies of the Scriptures so as to supply the wants of every human being; when commerce visits every part of the world; when wealth is abundant, and the means of supporting distant expeditions of benevolence are easily supplied; when the number of persons engaged in this good work is great and increasing; and, above all, when the day is not far distant, as we trust, in which the word of the Lord shall have free course, and its influence be felt from the rising to the setting sun.

It is to be remembered, that when any great design is to be accomplished for the church and the world, God sees fit to try those, who are engaged in it, by many adverse occurrences. Through what a series of difficulties did Moses conduct the Israelites before they were permitted to enter Canaan? Through what disheartening scenes were the immediate disciples of our Lord called to pass, before and after his resurrection? How dark and mysterious must it have appeared, that Paul, with his illustrious qualifications, should have spent so large a part of his life in prison, and in laboring with his own hands for a support; and should have been so perpetually exposed to the rage and persecution of ungodly men? In the time of the Reformation, also, how numerous were the difficulties to be encountered,—and frequently how unexpected,—before the truth could be preached with safety in a single nation in Europe? How often did the nations, which had been partially reformed, relapse into Popery, and

re-kindled the flames of persecution? When our ancestors first came to this country, and sacrificed their ease and comfort to establish churches in the wilderness, how many and various were their hardships? How often did they suffer under frowns of Providence, and how severely were their faith and hope tried? Yet, in all these instances, God was preparing his people for success and prosperity. So in most of the modern attempts to send the Gospel to the heathen, the discouragements, which at first presented themselves, have been overcome by zeal and perseverance. If the Moravians had yielded to the discouragements, of which they experienced a great variety, they never could have had, as they now have, one hundred and fifty missionaries, some of them in the most inhospitable climates, and *twenty thousand* hopeful converts. If the Missionary Society in England had given over their labors, at the loss of the ship Duff, they never could have had, as they now have, missionaries at twenty different stations; nor could they receive, as they now do, most gratifying intelligence of the progress made in communicating instruction, and of conversion from idols to Christ. If Zeingenbalg and his associates had been deterred by temporary hindrances, they could not have planted the Gospel more than a century ago, in southern India; nor could a long succession of missionaries and pastors have ministered to the churches, whose light has shone in that region with double splendor, in contrast with the surrounding darkness.

In estimating the success of missionaries, we must regard the stage of the mission, the difficulties to be met in the beginning, the value of an establishment among the heathen, and many other things, beside the number of converts made by the personal exertions of the first laborers in a new field. The man who shall learn a new language, conciliate the regard of even a few natives to the cause in which he is employed, add facilities to the acquisition of the language, begin a translation of the Scriptures, and prepare the way for others to labor with greater

advantages may eventually, be the instrument of bringing more souls to heaven, (though he should never be so happy as to see any fruit of his toil with his mortal eyes,) than the most honored servant of Christ in a Christian country.

They who urge against missions to the heathen the small immediate success, which usually attends the first attempts in a new region, would do well to consider, that without beginning there can be no progress,—without a progress no consummation. And shall there never be a beginning? Will Christians fold their hands, and leave the heathen to grope in Egyptian darkness, without an effort to enlighten them? Or, if this melancholy determination is not allowed, when shall the beginning be made? Can a more favorable time to institute new missions ever be expected? If this favorable crisis, when the Christian world is awake on the subject, should be suffered to pass away unimproved, who can ensure the return of another? But it will not pass away in this manner; it has already been seized by multitudes who will not relinquish the object. In regard to many missions, the beginning is past; the progress is cheering beyond expectation or hope; and a glorious consummation may be reasonably anticipated.

To those who allege, that little has been hitherto done in the great work, it may be replied, that, in most instances, quite as much has been done, as was expected by any man, who considered the means employed. In some instances, more has been done, than the most enthusiastic ventured to hope. Who would have dared to predict so salutary and speedy a change, as has been experienced at Bavian's Kloof and Bethelsdorp in South Africa, by the wild, ferocious, and besotted Caffres and Hottentots? From a state of the most deplorable ignorance and brutism several hundred families of these degraded people have been delivered by the preaching of the plain truths of the Gospel. Industry has taken the place of vagrancy; honesty the place of fraud and theft; cleanliness and decency have been introduced where the most sordid

and loathsome habits prevailed; *the love of Christ has been shed abroad in hearts*, which had been the residence of stupidity, sin and guilt; and the Christian graces and virtues have supplanted the selfish, malignant, and sensual passions and vices.

When Carey planned and entered upon a mission to Hindostan, about twenty years ago, he did not believe it credible, in his most sanguine moments, that his own eyes would ever witness such a progress as they have already witnessed. It appeared to him an object worthy of the most strenuous labors of a whole life to translate the New Testament into a single language; an object, which, if he might live to accomplish it, would furnish ground of everlasting gratitude and praise to God. What then must be his emotions, to see translations now carrying on in ten languages, in an establishment of which he was the founder; to see the publication of the New Testament in several languages, and a third edition of the whole Bible printing in one? What ought to be the emotions of Christians generally, while beholding these things, and the kindred efforts of other individuals and associates aiming at the same great end? How animating the thought that translations of the Scriptures are commenced in thirty Asiatic languages? Though we have to lament the early death of a Leyden, and a Martyn, yet others will be raised up to supply their places, and complete their benevolent designs.

The progress which has been made in obtaining a knowledge of the religious character of the Asiatics and of the necessary qualifications of a missionary; in ascertaining the manner in which many classes of the heathen are disposed to treat Christian instructors; and in establishing the fact, that the great doctrines of our holy religion produce their proper benign effects, wherever preached in simplicity,—may be regarded as highly important and satisfactory. The most common and popular objections to missions are found to be utterly groundless; and the day seems to

have nearly arrived, when, with all *who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*, there shall be but one opinion on the practicability and duty of engaging in missionary enterprises.

Are we to reason, and act, as though all these advances were unworthy of consideration? Is the progress already made to be accounted as nothing? Is it nothing, that missionaries are stationed in New Holland; at many places in Hindostan; in Ceylon; at five or six places in Africa; in Tartary; in South America; in Labrador and Greenland; and in the islands of the Pacific ocean? Is it nothing, that such a man as Dr. Buchanan has travelled, and published the result of his researches, in order to show the progress of Christianity in the east, and to press upon Christians the duty of activity in this great work? Is it nothing, that the caverns of the Inquisition at Goa have been thrown open, and the wretched captives suffered to go free? and that this victory of religion over superstition has been achieved in consequence of the benevolent attempts to extend the light of the Gospel to Asia? Is it nothing, that we are enabled, by intelligence received while we are writing, to celebrate the triumph of the friends of missions in the British Parliament? a triumph which unbars India to the missionaries of the cross? Is it nothing, that the executive government of Great Britain is strongly in favor of communicating religious instruction to sixty millions of Asiatic subjects? Is it nothing, that the voice of the English nation was raised, in the course of three mouths, to a louder note of intreaty in favor of sending Christianity to the east, than it had been raised for a century past, on any moral or political subject whatever, not accepting the abolition of the slave trade for which the nation struggled twenty years? Is it nothing, that nine hundred petitions loaded the tables of each House of Parliament, signed by nearly half a million of individuals,—a greater number than ever before offered petitions in their own hand-writing, for one common purpose, to any government on earth? Is it nothing, that

these petitions flocked together from every part of England, Ireland and Scotland, as if moved by the same impulse; that they were every where encouraged by the wise, the considerate, the benevolent, the pious; and that their success was earnestly desired by all classes of persons from the prince to the peasant, from the learned divine to the amiable child?

(To be continued.)



The Close of the Year.

THROUGH the mercy of a holy God, we are drawing to the close of another year. Many of our acquaintance, and thousands of our fellow-men, who began the year with as favorable prospects of seeing its termination as any who now survive, have finished their earthly course, and have appeared at the bar of God. Great are the changes which the passing year has produced, some of which will be attended with consequences lasting as eternity.

The interesting events of the year, now bidding us adieu, may be viewed in reference to ourselves, to our friends, to our fellow-men, and to the church of God. There are very few who can say, this year has not been productive of most important events to themselves. Such a portion of our season of probation, on which our immortal existence depends, is irrecoverably past. In the lives of all who enjoy the means of gospel instruction, there are, undoubtedly, certain points, on which turn their moral character, for all their future existence. Those who ever close with Christ, who renounce their enmity to him, for the love and service of holiness, do it at a certain time. Though the instances are few in which the mind can ascertain the precise moment of this interesting period; yet there is such a time in the existence of every one, who from a course of steady departure from the divine Saviour, becomes a humble friend of the Lord Jesus. It is equally true that there are those critical junctures in the lives of those who will be finally lost, which de-

cide their eternal ruin. These eventful periods of the immortal existence, it may not be very easy to point out, yet every attentive observer of his own character may determine some of them with a good degree of precision. They are times, when the mind yields to the power of temptation, while the conscience clearly sees the wrong and faithfully remonstrates; when the precepts of God are distinctly contemplated, and that inclination which invites to a plain disobedience, is obeyed; when the tender instances of parental fidelity or gospel ministrations, believed to be sanctioned by divine precept, and to flow from an affectionate tenderness, are disregarded; when voluntary vows, made in the face of heaven, and made as a condition of receiving providential blessings, are deliberately neglected; when covenant engagements, in which every power of the soul has sworn fidelity, are voluntarily violated; when the mind has an awful sense of the immediate presence of a holy, omniscient God, convinced of what would be pleasing to Him, yet taking the course of disobedience and transgression. Such events in the lives of the finally impenitent, will probably be viewed hereafter, as the turning points, on which the destinies of eternity are suspended. The reason that they are such, is, not that probation then absolutely closes, but that in consequence of such voluntary and deliberate engagements in the service of sin, the heart becomes hardened, the means of grace become ineffectual, the strivings of the good Spirit of God with the conscience grow feeble, and all the passions of wickedness receive renewed strength. The truth of God, flowing through the irresistible eloquence of Paul, brought the mind of the Roman governor to an awful pause; with trembling solemnity he resolved the question, shall I like Paul become a disciple of Jesus, or continue in the indulgence of sense and the service of sin? Hell and heaven were before him. For the present, heaven must be disregarded. His eternal allotment, probably turned on that decision.—Pilate saw his Lord before him, his conscience assuad him that

he was true, his aspect was shrouded with divine glory, he informed him who he was, and the governor was faithfully admonished of his danger; yet the love of the world and the deceitful charms of sin, rushing upon his mind with all their force, induced him to condemn his innocent prisoner and deliver him to death. The awful turn of his eternal character was now arrived, and it was soon decided.—Events equally interesting and transient, have determined the eternal moral standing of characters of an opposite description. Abraham is directed to offer his son, the son of his hopes, upon the altar of sacrifice. All the feelings of a father and the hopes of the church plead a non-compliance. The divine command is unconditional. The Patriarch's decision is made; he binds the victim. *By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee.*—Some of the early martyrs were chained in an iron chain at Lyons and burned over a slow fire. With all the instruments of suffering before them, they were informed that if they would abjure Christianity, and sacrifice to the gods of the empire, they should be discharged. They could not but reflect that if they rejected Christ now, they might afterwards have opportunity for repentance. But they saw that the period had arrived which should try their fidelity, in which they were called to witness for their Lord. They advance to the conflict, and their names are noted on high.

In view of these truths, it is deeply incumbent on every individual, in the review of any past period of human life, particularly in the review of a closing year, solemnly to enquire whether he has passed any of these eventful periods of his probationary state which may determine his eternal portion. The present year has produced such events with many. Some have closed with Christ, and have taken him as their only Saviour. Some have performed those trying services of fidelity for him, which determine their character for

eternity. Some, who yet live, have deliberately taken those courses of iniquity, which they will hereafter contemplate as having fixed them in the broad road of endless destruction.

At the close of the year we may profitably reflect on the dealings of divine Providence with us in reference to our friends. All human ties result from the divine appointment ; God knows their strength, and that they govern all the tender movements of the heart. In the mercies and afflictions which he sends upon our near connexions, he is directing our minds to himself, he is calling upon us to contemplate his character, to consider the design of his dealings, and to be instructed by his voice.—The events of Providence are peculiarly calculated to illustrate the divine character, and they faithfully corroborate the testimonies of holy scripture concerning God. The same is our God, in whom we live, to whom we are to account for all moral conduct, by whose pleasure our future being is to be appointed. In those events of his providence in which he comes near to us, he shows us the greatness of his mercy, his displeasure at iniquity, the terrible-ness of his justice, and the certainty of its execution. By all the persuasives of his mercy he invites us to renounce sin and follow him ; by all the terrors of his justice he warns us of the fatal dangers of iniquity.

As members of the whole human family, all of whom are ever under the guidance of heaven, we cannot be indifferent to the events of divine Providence, with which they are deeply affected. We have seen the present year calling all Christian nations, the whole of what is usually denominated the civilized world, to the conflict of war. No independent nation has been permitted to stand aloof from the scene. The conflict rages in all quarters of the globe, with an energy of strength never before witnessed, and with a ferocity apparently insatiable. War in all its forms, is God's sore judgment. Verily, the present is a day of the divine vengeance. The name of God has long been forgotten, Christ Jesus and his holy gospel

have been long neglected, the church has been hated and opposed, Zion has been despised. Israel's God is awaking to the execution of his threatenings. The voice of those that were slain for the word of God, that have long cried under the altar, saying, *How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* seems at length to have been heard. Have we not reason to fear the performance of the divine answer to the trembling prophet? *Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate.*

These gloomy apprehensions are soothed by the recollection that the Church yet lives, and that Zion's God is still on the throne. While, in the present year, we have seen infatuated millions rushing on to the gulph opened by the sword of slaughter, we have also seen divine grace enlarging the church's borders, the Holy Spirit accompanying the truths of the gospel with a divine energy, and, by the efficacy of sovereign mercy, many immortal souls commencing the eternal song. We have seen Christians deeply impressed with the necessity of conveying the blessings of the gospel to the destitute, and of laboring and praying for their success. We have witnessed the extent of this impression, and the unanimity of these exertions, to a degree that compels us to ascribe the effect to the interposing grace of God. Before the efforts of obedience and faith, the obstacles which timidity has long beheld to the dissemination of divine truth, surprisingly fall. Every effort affords new encouragement to labor for God, and for the fulfilment of his promises.—These events are cheering indications that the day of the church's travail is near its close. We discover the dawn of its rest and prosperity. The mighty struggles of wickedness are the struggles of despair ; for shortly it shall be trodden under the foot of its holy Conqueror, who died to redeem his people, who rose to protect and rule them for ever in glory. N.

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